



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SECURITY

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*From the Minister for Health*

The Rt Hon Kenneth Baker MP  
Secretary of State  
Department of Education and Science  
Elizabeth House  
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28 June 1986

SEX EDUCATION AT SCHOOL

In my letter of 5 June I promised to let you have some detailed comments on the text of the draft circular attached to Sir Keith Joseph's letter of 20 May.

My first relates to the section headed "Advice to Pupils under 16." In paragraph 10 (on individual approaches to teachers by pupils for advice about sexual behaviour) it would seem important to refer to the action that should be taken where a pupil alleges that he or she has been sexually abused (particularly as a member of the child's own family may be involved and the child may not be able to turn to parents for advice). There is, as you know, considerable concern about child sexual abuse, and in the consultation document this Department has recently issued on child abuse procedures, specific reference has been made to suspected cases of sexual abuse. The document stresses the importance of collaboration procedures between agencies (including schools), and it would be helpful if your circular could refer to this, too.

I therefore suggest that the following passage be added to the end of paragraph 10:

"Where a pupil alleges that he or she has been sexually abused - possibly by a member of the family - teachers should follow the established local procedures for inter-agency collaboration on child abuse work to ensure that the child receives appropriate professional advice and protection where necessary."

Secondly, I know the Chief Medical Officer has recently written to you expressing his concern about education on the risks of AIDS, and I note that the HMI discussion paper "Health Education from 5-16" refers to AIDS in its section on the scope of sex education. Again, I think it would be helpful to remind schools, by a specific reference in the circular, about this problem.

**E.R.**

My suggestion is that in line 9 of paragraph 4 of the circular the phrase "(including AIDS)" be inserted after "sexually transmitted diseases."

I hope these amendments are acceptable. I would be grateful to be sent a copy of the circular when finished, and to be notified of the likely date of issue. I am copying this letter to Malcolm Rifkind, Nicholas Edwards and Tom King.



GRO-C

BARNEY HAYHOE

cc  
Mr Denham  
Mr Langsdon  
Mr Fisher  
Miss Coker  
Mr Kerin  
Mr Heppell  
Dr Modle  
Dr Lister-Cheese  
Dr Raynes  
Miss Greenwood  
Mr Moutrie  
Mr Long  
Mr Orr  
Mr Murray  
*M. Jyd.*